

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-12 remain in the application. Each of the claims has been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, amendments to eliminate numeric references are not narrowing amendments and are not amendments entered for purposes of patentability. Claim 6 also has been amended to insert a missing word, and to address the objection raised in the Office Action.

The original specification included FIGS. 14(A), 14(B), 15(A) and 15(B). However, paragraph 0002 of the specification used a shorthand reference to FIGS. 14 and 15. The Examiner objected to that shorthand.

Paragraph 0002 of the specification has been amended to refer to the figures in a manner that conforms with the actual figures filed with the application.

The Examiner noted that paragraphs 0023-0027 did not identify the figures as exploded views.

Each of paragraphs 0023-0027 has been amended to refer to the figures as being exploded.

The Examiner stated that it is unclear how the retainer can move in a width direction as stated in paragraph 0041. Additionally, the Examiner stated that the two lead lines extending from the numeral 25 in FIGS. 4 and 5 create confusion.

Some connectors include front mounted retainers, while others include side-mounted retainers. Engineers skilled in this technology will design a connector for either a front-mounted retainer or a side-mounted retainer based on a whole host of

design considerations. In this instance, the inventors want the resilient member 50 to be pushed back by the pushing portion 10a on the mating housing 10. Such a design would complicate the ability to use a front-mounted retainer in the connector. Hence, the connector of this invention is designed for a side-mounted retainer that is mounted for movement in the width direction WD

Side-mounted retainers are very well known to those with ordinary skill in this art and many examples exist in the patent literature. The retainer typically can be moved transversely between a first or partial locking position and a second or full locking position. The side-mounted retainer typically has terminal engaging structures that are offset from the cavity when the retainer is in the first or partial locking position. In this position, retention of the terminal fittings in the cavity is achieved entirely by locking structure on the terminal fitting and/or in the housing. After all terminal fittings have been inserted, the retainer is pushed in the width direction WD to the second or full locking position. This transverse movement of the retainer moves the terminal engaging structures on the retainer into the cavities at a location behind an engaging surface on the terminal fittings. Thus, the side-mounted retainer prevents a rearward movement of the terminal fittings out of the cavities. The retainer cooperates with the locking structure in the housing to achieve a redundant or double locking of the terminal fitting.

Counsel and the applicants have noted the Examiner comments regarding the lead lines that extend from the numeral 25 to two locations. These lead lines identify two spaced-apart locations on the retainer. The cross section shown in FIGS. 4 and 5 do not shown any parts of the retainer that connect the spaced-apart sections

illustrated in FIGS. 4 and 5. The elimination of one of these lead lines could lead to doubts as to the identity of the element that did not have the lead lines. The use of two separate numerals and two separate lead lines could lead one to infer that two separate retainers are shown. Once again, it is believed that a person skilled in this art would appreciate that the two lead lines from the numeral 25 merely identified two separate parts of the retainer. It should also be noted that the claims do not positively recite the retainer, and an understanding of the retainer is not necessary to understand the claimed invention. The Section 112 requirements pertain to the claimed invention. The specification is very clear with respect to the illustration and descriptions of all elements recited in the claims.

The Examiner objected to paragraph 0067 and stated that the elements recited therein were not all shown in phantom.

Paragraph 0067 has been amended to clarify that only the female housing 20 is shown in phantom.

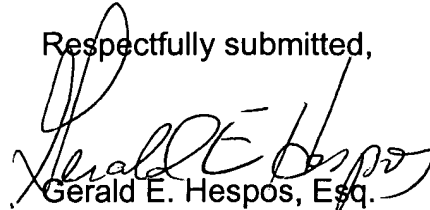
The Examiner objected to claim 6 and stated her belief that the word "wherein" is missing from line 1.

The Examiner is correct. Claim 6 has been amended to incorporate the word "wherein".

The applicants are pleased to note that the Examiner considers all of the original claims 1-12 to defined patentable subject matter.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, and in view of comments in the Office Action, it is believed that the application is in condition for issuance of a Notice of Allowance. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Hespos".

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